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10/10/101  
Education  
Educational Resources  
CEMREL AEP Archives Publications and Reports, 1968-1982

## **CEMREL-AESTHETIC EDUCATION PROGRAM ARCHIVES: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

The Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory (CEMREL) was one of several regional programs established in 1965 with funding from the National Institute of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare in an effort to develop new approaches to what were then seen as key problems in elementary and secondary education. Headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, CEMREL's mission was to conduct research and develop new curricular materials and teaching methods primarily for elementary and secondary schools.<sup>1</sup>

From 1965 to the mid-1970s, CEMREL's main components were AEP - Aesthetic Education Program, CSMP - the Comprehensive School Math Program, and ISP - Instructional Systems Project. Each program used federal and private funding to conduct research on educational methods and develop new instructional materials, often in the form of curriculum packages, to address needs not being met by traditional textbooks and instruction.

Although CEMREL received approximately 95 percent of its multi-million dollar annual budget from federal research grants and contracts, its officers maintained that it was an independent, non-profit corporation and not subject to federal accounting and spending regulations. Federal granting agencies disagreed, and this basic dispute over CEMREL's managerial autonomy was a key factor in its demise. As part of policy changes in the administration of President Ronald Reagan, the fiscal year 1981-1982 budget of the National Institute of Education was reduced by 27 percent. This had a direct effect on CEMREL in that it caused NIE to scrutinize more closely the agencies it funded. CEMREL's 1980 audit was re-examined and as a result, its fiscal responsibility questioned. In April 1981, a special investigator from NIE was appointed to examine the audit's criticism relating to conflict of interest, consultant fees, diversion of funds from educational programs, travel and entertainment expenditures, and similar matters.<sup>2</sup> A second audit was ordered and Congressional hearings threatened. Concurrently, CEMREL was being investigated by the U.S. Justice Department for the possibility of criminal violations concerning its operations and allegations of misuse of funds.

In the course of the investigations, CEMREL's director, Wade Robinson, resigned (July 23, 1982). Efforts were made to reorganize and an interim head was appointed, but CEMREL's attempts to re-establish its credibility were unavailing. Federal funding was withdrawn November 30, 1982 and the majority of its staff and operations ceased as of that date. CEMREL continued with a skeleton staff for another six months pending appeal of the termination of its contract with

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley S. Madeja and Sheila Onuska, Through the Arts to the Aesthetic, (St. Louis: CEMREL Inc, 1977) xii.

<sup>2</sup>"U.S. Inquiry on Education Laboratory," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 9, 1981, A-1, 9.

the Department of Education. However, when this appeal was rejected by the General Accounting Office June 2, 1983, CEMREL operations ceased entirely.<sup>3</sup>

## PROVENANCE

Following the 1983 closing of CEMREL, the archives of the Aesthetic Education Program were moved from St. Louis to the Department of Education in Washington. According to information provided in spring, 1985 by Kent Viehoever of the NIE, the CEMREL archives were housed in the NIE's library in its downtown Washington, D.C. offices. While the material was held at the NIE, large portions of the printed and audio-visual material in the CEMREL records were removed and placed in the NIE library. By 1984-85, space considerations required that the NIE move the material from its downtown offices to a warehouse in Landover, Maryland. As part of 1985 procedures to close the National Institute of Education, Department of Education personnel offered the archives of CEMREL-AEP to the University of Illinois because of the long involvement of its faculty in the program and its research interests in aesthetic education.

## CONTENT AND ARRANGEMENT

Except for a small group of publications and reports from the Comprehensive School Mathematics Program, School Learning Policies Group, and Urban Education Program, the University of Illinois Archives holds only the materials relating to the aesthetic education programs of CEMREL. Aesthetic education, according to CEMREL's definition was:

. . . instruction designed to enrich a person's life by increasing one's capacity to use the senses joyfully in experiencing the world. . . . A full program of aesthetic education in the schools will produce students who can perceive, analyze, judge and value things they see, hear and touch. . . . With the arts disciplines as content and as means for getting at the elements, the processes and the behaviors related to aesthetic values, aesthetic education is an area of study analogous to studies of science or language arts.<sup>4</sup>

The basic goals of the Aesthetic Education Program for the 1966-76 period were: to design an elementary curriculum for students in kindergarten through grade six using a multi-media approach based on a "modular system" of instructional units, develop teacher education programs to support this curriculum, create greater sensitivity in the federal government and public at large regarding the importance of aesthetic education, and build a base of support for aesthetic education by implementing the program in as many schools as possible.<sup>5</sup> Starting in 1977, aesthetic education activities focused on a series of research projects conducted through CEMREL's Arts

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<sup>3</sup>Additional information on the closing of CEMREL can be found in the following articles from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch: "CEMREL to Meet on Funds Cutoff," 6 October 1982, p. A 1; "CEMREL Directors May Replace Selves to Ensure Funding," 11 October 1982, p. A 3; "Audit of CEMREL Will Sever Ties with Government," 11 May 1983, p. N2 1; and "U.S. Rejects CEMREL's Appeal," 2 June 1983, p. C-10.

<sup>4</sup>Aesthetic Education: A Social and Individual Need, (St. Louis: CEMREL Inc., 1972).

<sup>5</sup>Madeja and Onuska, Through the Arts, xv.

and Humanities Group. It concentrated on researching: the effect of aesthetic instruction on overall student achievement; effect of school conditions, resources, and policies on learning; the relationship of knowledge about human growth and development to instructional programs; and methods for the evaluation and measurement of learning in arts and humanities.<sup>6</sup>

Collectively, record series 10/10/101, 10/10/103, 10/10/105, 10/10/110, 10/10/111, and 10/10/112 have been identified as the "CEMREL-AEP Archives" based on name of the earliest and longest running aesthetic education component of CEMREL. These records also cover CEMREL's other efforts in aesthetic education including the Arts in General Education (1971-74), Arts and Humanities Group (1977-82), and Aesthetic Education Project (1980-82) and related activities in other CEMREL programs including Arts and Humanities Adaptability Project, School Learning and Policies Group, School Improvement Task Force, and Comprehensive School Mathematics Program.

The records have been arranged into six separate record series: Publications, Administrative Files, Program Materials, Motion Pictures, Audio Recordings, and Slides. There is a considerable overlap from series to series. For example, correspondence, reports and publications, along with a few tapes, films and slides will appear in the Program Materials. Reports also will appear in the Publications and Administrative files, and curricular packets may be found in both the Program Materials and Administrative Files.

## **PROCESSING AND FINDING AIDS**

While extensive efforts were made to arrange and describe the material clearly and logically, researchers may find anomalies in both areas. This is a result of the combination of the files maintenance practices during their active use, the several moves they experienced, the disorder of the files upon their arrival at Illinois, the large volume of records, and the lack of summary information about CEMREL's administrative structure and practices. Within available resources, the material was arranged into six record series by type of file or document:

10/10/101	Publications and Reports
10/10/103	Administrative Files
10/10/105	Program Materials
10/10/110	Motion Pictures
10/10/111	Audio Recordings
10/10/112	Slides

Below the series level, the best-arranged and described materials are in the Publications and Administrative Files Series. In the Program Materials, there is repetition of file groupings/instructional units because the units are in order based on when they were processed by the Archives' staff, but efforts have been made to keep together material relating to specific units and instructional series. Many of the sound and video recordings and slides have been identified in a summary fashion only. They are arranged based on sequential numbers assigned when they

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<sup>6</sup>"Arts and Humanities Group Five Year Plan," September, 1977. (CEMREL-AEP Archives Administrative Files, Record Series 10/10/103, Box 11.)

were processed.

It is anticipated that researchers will need to scan these finding aids to locate topics of interest. To simplify the process of searching for topics, titles and names, all of the CEMREL-AEP finding aids are available on an IBM diskette for use with word-processing or searching software. The University of Illinois Archives welcomes users' comments on, and corrections of, information contained in these finding aids.

The arrangement and description of the CEMREL-AEP Archives has been a cooperative effort under the direction of Maynard Brichford and William Maher. Processing work was completed by Beverly Bishop, Hilary Murphy, and Herbert Leighton. The long and difficult work of typing, proofing and editing the finding aids was performed by Karen Swanson and Sally Marion.